

Executive Summary

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Resolution 01-22 adopted on March 15, 2001, created the SFWMD Governing Board's Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) as a means of obtaining stakeholder input on South Florida's critical water resources. The main purpose of the WRAC, an advisory body to the Governing Board, is to develop consensus based recommendations regarding future water resources activities needed to restore, preserve and protect the greater South Florida ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection. Section 3 of the Resolution sets forth a series of eight tasks to be carried out the WRAC.

This report is issued pursuant to SFWMD Resolution 01-22 Section 4 Status Reporting, which directs the WRAC to provide monthly status report to the Governing Board and develop a "Priority Plan". The Priority Plan is to be updated on a quarterly basis and submitted for review and concurrence at regularly scheduled meetings of the Governing Board.

The highest responsibility selected by the members of the Water Resources Advisory Commission (Commission), from among the responsibilities assigned by the Governing Board is to serve as a forum for consensus building on a variety of water resource issues. The Commission identified a number of issues that they would like to prepare as practical recommendations for the SFWMD Governing Board's consideration. The top three issues are:

1. Coordinate Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Programmatic Regulations and related water assurance issues, e.g. ~~Water Use Rulemaking Issues~~, Consumptive Use Permitting, ~~and~~ Minimum Flows and Levels, reservations, etc.
2. CERP Program and Project scheduling and implementation; and
3. Federal and State CERP funding and ~~appropriations and implementation~~ financial reporting issues.

The WRAC will be working to develop recommendations regarding the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2000 Programmatic Regulations by February of 2002, which fits within the tight time frame established by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete their development. The schedule for the development of recommendations on the second and third top priorities will be provided in future updates of the Priority Plan. The WRAC will most likely not consider the other issues listed in this plan during the 2001 – 2002 fiscal year. However, should decisions related to the issues identified in the body of this report come up during the year, WRAC would like the opportunity to make recommendations on the matters.

The Commission members have agreed to meet on the first Thursday of every month and have requested a number of water resource briefings. The two-fold purpose of these briefings is to provide an overall picture of the more critical water resource issues affecting the South Florida Ecosystem and to begin establishing a common ground between the Commission members. Briefings will continue to be provided during the course of the year, but with less frequency as the WRAC begins the consensus development process.

Through the process of consensus, the Commission made a commitment to meet at least once a year in the four water supply planning regions of the SFWMD. The four regions are the Lower East Coast, Upper East Coast, Kissimmee Basin, and Lower West Coast. In Fiscal Year 2001-2001, the Commission is scheduled to meet in the following counties: Lee, Miami-Dade, Martin, Monroe, and Okeechobee. Local water resources, projects, and growth management issues briefings will be provided to the WRAC during these "out of headquarters" meetings.

The Commission has decided to provide plenty of opportunities to hear public comments during the course of their meetings as a means to ~~Soliciting and~~ providing opportunities for public input on key issues involved in establishing and sustaining a healthy ecosystem and economy into the future. ~~is the priority item that was ranked last among the responsibilities assigned by the Governing board.~~ Additionally, during "out of headquarters" meeting the WRAC will hold informal public receptions to meet members of the hosting communities.

In addition to continuing to receive water resource briefings, the Commission is scheduled to begin consensus development deliberations at their August 2001 meeting.

The Priority Plan is a working document that will be updated on a quarterly basis to accurately reflect the future activities and deliberations of the Water Resources Advisory Commission. In addition to the monthly reports to the Governing Board, the Commission will submit additional reports as necessary to meet its charge.